

THE

2

Miller's TALE,

FROM

CHAUCER.

Inscrib'd to

N. ROWE, Esq;

By Mr. COBB.



LONDON:

Printed in the Year MDCCXXV.

THE NEW YORK

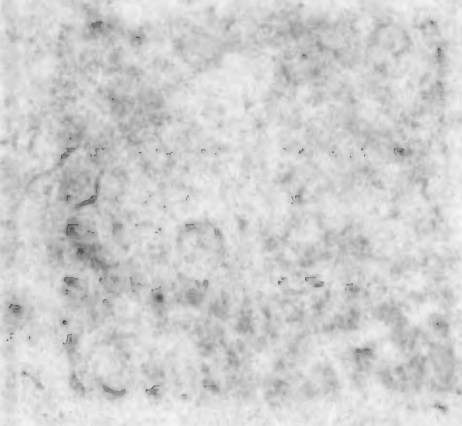
LIBRARY

OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

AND THE LIBRARY OF THE

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEW YORK, 1880



NEW YORK, 1880

NEW YORK, 1880

NEW YORK, 1880



C



N
A
C
C

V
W
A
W
B



THE
Miller's TALE,
FROM
CHAUCER.

Inscrib'd to
N. ROWE, *Esq;*



The ARGUMENT.

NICHOLAS, a Scholar of Oxford, practiseth with
ALISON, the Carpenter's Wife of Osney, to de-
ceive her Husband; but in the End is rewarded ac-
cordingly.

WHilom in Oxford an old Chuff did dwell,
A Carpenter by Trade, as Stories tell:
Who by his Craft had heap'd up many a Hoard,
And furnish'd Strangers both with Bed and Board.
With him a Scholar lodg'd, of slender Means,
But notable for Sciences and Sense,

Yet, tho' he took Degrees in Arts, his Mind
 Was mostly to *Astrology*-inclin'd :
 A Lad in *Divination* skill'd and shrew'd,
 Who by Interrogations could conclude,
 If Men should ask him, at what certain Hours
 The doughty Earth would gape for cooling Show'rs,
 When it should rain, or snow, what should befall
 Of fifty Things ; I cannot reckon all.

This learned *Clerk* had got a mighty Fame
 For Modesty, and *NICHOLAS*, his Name.
 Subtile he was, well taught in *Cupid's* Trade,
 But seem'd as meek and bashful as a Maid.

A Chamber in this Hostelry he kept,
 Alone he study'd, and alone he slept.
 With sweet and fragrant Herbs the Room was drest,
 But he was ten Times sweeter than the best ;
 His Books of various Size, or great, or small,
 His *Aurim* Stones to cast Accompts withal ;
 His *Astrolabe* and *Almagist* * apart,
 With twenty more hard Names of cunning Art,
 On several Shelves were couched nigh his Bed,
 And the Press cover'd with a folding Red.
 Above, an Instrument of Musick lay,
 On which sweet Melody he us'd to play,
 So wond'rous sweet, that all the Chambers rung,
 And *Angelus ad Virginem* † he sung ;
 Then would he chant in good King *David's* Note,
 Full often blessed was his merry Throat.
 And thus the *Clerk* in Books and Musick spent
 His Time, and Exhibitions yearly Rent.

This *Carpenter* had a new-married Wife,
 Lov'd as his Eyes, and dearer than his Life.
 The buxom Lass had twice nine Summers seen,
 And her brisk Blood ran high in ev'ry Vein.
 The Dotard, jealous of so ripe an Age,
 Watch'd her, and lock'd her, like a Bird in Cage :

* *The Name of a Book of Astronomy, written by Ptolomy.*

† *The Angel's Salutation to the Virgin Mary.*

For she was wild, and in her lovely Prime ;
 But he, poor Man ! walk'd down the *Hill of Time*.
 He knew the Temper of a youthful Spouse,
 And oft was seen to rub his aking Brows.
 He knew his own weak Side, and dreamt in Bed,
 She had, or would be planting on his Head.
 He knew not *Cato*, for his Wit was rude,
 That Men should wed with their Similitude.
 Like should with Like, in Love and Years engage,
 For *Youth* can never be a Rhime to *Age*.
 Hence Jealousies create a nuptial War,
 And the warm Seasons with the frigid Jar :
 But when the Trap's once down, he must endure
 His Fate, and *Patience is the only Cure*.
 Perhaps his Father, and a hundred more
 Of honest Christians, were thus serv'd before.
 Fair was his charming Consort, and withal
 Slender her Waste, and like a *Weasel's* small.
 She had a Girdle barred all with Silk,
 And a clean Apron, white as Morrow Milk.
 White as her Smock, embroider'd all before,
 Which on her Loins in many Plates she wore.
 Broad was her silken Fillet, set full high,
 And oft she twinkled with a liquorish Eye.
 Her Brows were arched like a bended Bow.
 Like *Marble* smooth, and blacker than a *Sloe*,
 She softer far than *Wool* or fleecy *Snow*.
 Were you to search the Universe around,
 So gay a Wench was never to be found.
 With greater Brightness did her Colour shine,
 Than a new *Noble* of the freshest Coin.
 Shrill was her Song, and loud her piercing Note,
 No *Swallow* on a Barn had such a Throat.
 To this she skip'd and caper'd, like a *Lamb*,
 Or *Kid*, or *Calf*, when they pursue their Dam :
 Sweet as *Metheglin* was her *Honey Lip*,
 Or Hoard of *Apples* which in *Hay* are kept.
 Wincing she was, as is a jolly *Colt*,
 Long as a Mast, and upright as a Bolt.

Above her Ancles laced was her Shoe ;
 She was a *Primrose* and a *Pigsnye* too ;
 And fit to lig by any Christian's Side,
 Or a Lord's Mistress, or a Yeoman's Bride.

Now, Sir, what think you how the Case befell ?
 This *Nicholas*, (for I the Truth will tell)

Was a meer Wag, and on a certain Day,
 When the good Man, the Husband, was away,
 Began to sport and wanton with his Dame,
 (For *Clerks* are fly, and very full of Game)
 And privily he caught her by *That same*.

My * Lemman Dear, (quoth he) I'm all on Fire,
 And perish, if you grant not m^e Desire.

He clasp'd her round, and held her fast, and cry'd,
 O let me, let me — never be deny'd.

At this she wreath'd her Head, and sprung aloof,
 Like a young frisking *Colt*, whose tender Hoof
 Ne'er felt the Farrier's Hand, and never knew
 The Virgin Burden of an Iron Shoe.

Fie, *Nicholas*, away your Hands, quoth she,
 Is this your Breeding and Civility ?

Foh ! Idle Sot ! What means th'unmanner'd Clown,
 To teaze me thus, and toss me up and down ?

I vow I'll tell, and bawl it o'er the Town.

You're rude, and will you not be answer'd, No !
 I will not kiss you — prithee, let me go.

Here *Nicholas*, a young, designing Knave.
 Began to weep, and cant, and Pardon crave.

So fair he spoke, and importun'd so fast,
 This seeming modest Spouse consents at last ;
 By good St. *Thomas* † swore, her usual Oath,
 That she would meet his Love, tho' mighty loth.

“ If you, said she, convenient Leisure wait,

“ (You know my Husband has a jealous Pate)

“ I will requite you, for if once the Beast

“ Should chance to find us out, and smell the Jest,

“ I must be a dead Woman at the least.

* *Mistress*.

† *St. Thomas à Becket*.

Let that, quoth *Nicholas*, ne'er vex your Head;
 He must be a meer learned Afs indeed,
 And very foolishly besets his Wile,
 Who cannot a dull Carpenter beguile.
 And thus they were accorded, thus they swore
 To wait the Time, as I have said before.
 And now, when *Nicholas* had wore away
 The pleasant Time in harmless am'rous Play,
 To his melodious Psaltery he flew,
 Play'd Tunes of Love, by which his Passion grew,
 Then printed on her Lips a dear *Adieu*.

It happen'd thus, I cannot rightly tell,
 If it on *Easter*, or on *Whitson* fell;
 That on a Holiday, this modest Dame
 To Church with other honest Neighbours came,
 In a good Fit, to hear the Parson preach
 What the divine Apostles us'd to teach.
 Bright was her Forehead, and no Summer's Day
 Shone half so clear, so tempting, and so gay.

Now to this Parish did a Clerk belong,
 Who many a Time had rais'd a holy Song.
 His Name was *Abfalon*, a silly Man,
 Who curl'd his Hair, which strutted like a Fan,
 And from his jolly, pert, and empty Head,
 In Golden Ringlets on his Shoulders spread.
 His Face was red, his Eyes as grey as Goose,
 With *St. Paul's* Windows figur'd on his Shoes.
 Full properly he walk'd in Scarlet Hose;
 But light and Silver-colour'd were his Cloaths,
 And Surplice white as Blossoms on the Rose.
 Thick Poynts and Tassels did the Coxcomb please,
 And fet'ously they dangled on his Knees.
 He could let Blood, and shave your Beard and Head,
 But a meer Barber-Surgeon by his Trade.
 Nay, he could write and read, and that is more
 Than twenty Parish-Clerks could do before,
 Nay, he could fill a Bond, and learnt from *France*,
 In thirty Motions, how to trip and dance;
 Could frisk and toss his twirling Legs in Air,
 Nice were his Feet, and trod it to a Hair.

Songs would he play, and not to hide his Wit,
 Would squeak a Treble to his squaling Kit.
 His Dress was finical, his Musick queer,
 And pleas'd a Tapster's Eyes, or Drawer's Ear,
 No Tavern, Brew-House, Ale-House, in the Town,
 Was to the gentle *Abfalon* unknown:
 But he was very careful of his Wind,
 And never let it fall out behind.

To give the Devil his due, he had an Art,
 By civil Speech, to win a Lady's Heart.

This *Abfalon*, so jolly, spruce and gay,
 Went with the *Censor* on the Sabbath-Day.
 He swung the Incense Pot with comely Grace,
 But chiefly would he fume a pretty Face.
 His wanton Eye, which ev'ry where he cast,
 Dwelt on the *Carpenter's* fine Dame at last.
 So sweet and proper was his lovely Wife,
 That he could freely gaze away his Life.
 Were he a Cat, this pretty Mouse would feel
 Too soon his Talons, a delicious Meal.

And now had *Cupid* shot a piercing Dart,
 And wet the Feathers in his wounded Heart.
 No Off'ring of the handsome Wives he took,
 He wanted nothing but a smiling Look.
 The Parish Fees, refus'd, and said, the Light
 Of the fair Moon shines brightest in the Night.
 Soon as the Cock had bid the Morning rise,
 The smitten Lover to his Fiddle flies;
 A hideous Noise his squeaking Trilloes make,
 And all the drowsy Neighbourhood awake.
 At the lov'd House some am'rous Tunes he play'd,
 And thus with gentle Voice he sung, or said,
Now, dear Lady, if thy Will be,
I pray you that you'll pity me.

And twenty such complaining Notes he sung,
 Alike the Musick of his Kit and Tongue.
 At this the staring *Carpenter* awoke,
 And thus his Wife (fair *Alison*) bespoke:
 Art thou asleep, or art thou deaf, my Dear?
 And cannot *Abfalon* at Window hear?

How

How with his Serenade he charms us all,
 Chanting melodiously beneath our Wall?
 Yes, yes, I hear him *Alison* reply'd,
 Too well, God wot; and then she turn'd aside.
 Thus went Affairs, 'till *Abfalon*, alas!
 Was a lost Creature, a meer whining Ass.
 All Night he wakes, and sighs, and wears away
 On his broad Locks and Drefs the live long Day.
 To such a Height his doating Fondness grew,
 To kiss the Ground, and wipe her very Shoe.
 Where'er she went, he like a Slave pursu'd,
 With spiced Ale, and sweet Metheglin woo'd.
 All Dainties he could rap and rend he got,
 And sent her Tarts and Custards piping hot.
 He spar'd no Cost for an expensive Treat,
 Of Mead and Cyder, and all sorts of Meat.
 Throbbing he sings with his lamenting Throat,
 And rivals *Philomela's* mournful Note.
 With Rigour some, and some with gentle Arts,
 Have found a Passage to young Ladies Hearts:
 Some Wealth have won, and some have had the Lot
 To fall enamour'd with a treating Sot.
 Sometimes he Scaramouched it on high,
 And Harlequin'd it with Activity;
 Betrays the Lightness of his empty Head,
 And how he could cut Capers in a Bed.
 But neither this nor that the Damsel move,
 For *Nicholas* has swept the Stakes of Love.
 The Parish-Clerk has nothing met but Scorn,
 And may go fiddle now, or blow his Horn.
 Thus gentle *Abfalon* is made her Ape,
 And all his Passion turn'd into a Jape:
 For *Nicholas* is always in her Eye;
 True, says the Proverb, that the *Nigh are fly*:
 A distant Love may Disappointment find,
 For out of Sight is ever out of Mind.
 The Scholar was at Hand, as I have told,
 And gave the Parish-Clerk the Dog to hold.
 Now, *Nicholas*, thy Craft and Cunning try,
 That *Abfalon* may *de profundis* cry.

Now when this Carpenter was call'd away,
 To work at *Osney*, on a certain Day;
 The subtile Scholar, and the wanton Spouse,
 Were decently contriving for his Brows:
 Agreed, that *Nicholas* should shape a Wile,
 Her addle-pated Husband to beguile.
 And if so be the Game succeeded right,
 She then would sleep within his Arms all Night:
 For both were in this one Desire concern'd,
 Alike they suffer'd, and alike they burn'd.
 Straight a new Thought leap'd cross the Scholar's Head,
 Who at that Instant to his Chamber fled:
 But to relieve his Thirst and Hunger, bore
 Of Meat and Liquor, a substantial Store,
 And victuall'd it for a long Day or more.
Alce, should your Husband ask for Us, quoth he,
 Reply, in Scorn, what's *Nicholas* to Me?
 Am I his Keeper? Help your silly Head!
 Perhaps the Man is mad, asleep, or dead.
 My Maid indeed has thump'd this Hour or more,
 And knock'd as if she'd thunder down the Door;
 But he, a moaping Drone, no Answer gave,
 Fast as a Church, and silent as the Grave.

Thus did one *Saturday* entire consume,
 Since *Nicholas* had lock'd him in his Room.
 Nor was he idle, for no *Lent* he kept,
 But eat like other Men, and drank, and slept;
 Did what he list, till the next Sun was new,
 And went to Rest as common Mortals do.

This Carpenter was in a grievous Pain,
 Lest *Nicholas* should over-work his Brain:
 By Study lose his Reason, or his Life.
 Well, by St. *Thomas*, I don't like it, Wife.
 The World we live in is a ticklish Place,
 And sudden Death has often stopp'd our Race;
 I saw a Corps, as to the Church it past,
 And the poor Man at work but *Monday* last.
 Run, *Dick*, quoth he, run speedily up Stairs,
 Thump at the Door, and see how stands Affairs.

Up strait he runs, like any Tempest flies,
 And knocks, and bawls, and like a Madman cries,
 Ho! Master *Nicholas*, what mean you, thus
 To sleep all Night, and Day, and frighten us?
 He might as well have whistled to the Wind,
 As from good *Nicholas* an Answer find.

At last he spy'd a Hole full low and deep,
 Where usually the Cat was wont to creep;
 Here was discover'd to his wond'ring Sight
 The Scholar gazing with his Eyes upright,
 As if intent upon the Stars and Moon;
 And down runs he to tell his Master soon,
 In what Array he saw this studious Man:
 The Carpenter to cross himself began;
 And cry'd St. *Frideswid*, help us one and all!
 Little we know what Fate shall us befall.

This Man with his Astronomy is got
 Into some Frenzy, and stark mad, God wot:
 This comes of poring on his cunning Books,
 Of his Moon-snuffing, and Star-peeping Looks.
 Why should a silly Earth-born Mortal pry
 On Heav'n, and search the Secrets of the Sky?
 Well fare those Men, who no more Learning need,

(Creed,

Than what's contain'd in the Lord's Pray'r, and
 Scholars sufficient, if they can but read.

Thus far'd a sage Philosopher * of old,
 Who walking out, as 'tis in Story told,
 Was so much with Astronomy bewitch'd,
 That his star-gazing Clerkship was beditch'd.
 Ill Luck attends the Man who looks too high,
 And can a Star, but not a Marlpit spy.

Eut, by St. *Thomas*, this shall never pass;
 Too well I love this gentle *Nicholas*:
 I'll ferret him, unless the Devil's in it,
 From his brown Fit of Study in a Minute.

Robin, let's try if that an Iron Pur,
 And your strong Back, can make this Scholar stir,

Now *Robin* was a Lad of Brawn and Bones,
 And by the Hasp heav'd up the Door at once;
 Which in the Chamber fell with dreadful Sound,
 As would a Man like you or me astound.
 But *Nicholas* did nothing do but stare,
 And, like a Statue, gape into the Air.

This Carpenter was in a piteous Fear,
 Because he did not, or he would not, hear;
 Thought some deep Melancholly had impair'd
 His Brain, and that of Mercy he despair'd;
 For which the Student in his Arms he took
 With Might and Main, and by the Shoulders shook;
 Cry'd, *Nicholas*, awake! What, not a Word?
 Look down, despair not — think upon the Lord!
 Then the Night Spell he mumbled to himself:
 Bless thee from Fiends, and ev'ry wicked Elf!
 He cross the Threshold, where the Devil might creep,
 And each small Hole, through which an Imp might
 (peep:

With solemn *Pater-nosters* blest the Door,
 And *Ave-Mary's*, after and before.

At this the Clerk sent forth a heavy Sigh,
 With Tears, and woful Tone began to cry —
And shall this World be lost so soon? Ah, why?
 What do I hear? the Carpenter reply'd,
 What say'st thou, *Nich'las*? sure thou art beside
 Thy self: Serve God, as we poor Lab'ers do,
 And then no Harm, no Danger will ensue.
 Ah! Friend, quoth *Nicholas*, you little think
 What I can tell; but first let's have some Drink,
 Then, my dear Host, thou shalt in private learn
 Some certain Things which thee and me concern:
 It shall no Mortal but your self avail;
 Then fetch a *Winchester* of mighty Ale.
 And now when both had drank an equal Share,
 Cries *Nicholas*, sit down, and draw your Chair:
 But first, sweet Landlord, you must take an Oath,
 To no Man living to betray the Troth;
 For, trust me, what I'm going to relate
 Is Revelation, and as sure as Fate:

And

And if you tell, this Vengeance will ensue,
No Hare in *March* will be so mad as you.

Nay, quoth mine Host, I am no Blab, not I,
And hang me, if you catch me in a Lie.
I would not tell, tho' 'twere to save my Life,
To Chick, or Child, to Man, or Maid, or Wife.

Now, *John*, quoth *Nicholas*, I will not hide
What by my Art I have of late descry'd;
How as I por'd upon fair *Cynthia's* Light,
Should fall on *Monday* next, at Quarter-Night,

A Rain so sudden, and so long to boot,
That *Noah's* Flood was but a Spoonful to't.
This World, within the Compass of an Hour
Shall all be drown'd; so hideous is the Show'r,
As will the Cattle and Mankind devour.

Cries then this Man, Alas, my Wife!
My Bosom-Comfort, and my better Life!
And must she drown and perish with the rest?
My *Alison*, the Darling of my Breast.

At this well nigh he swoon'd, o'erwhelm'd with Grief,
Fetch'd a deep Sigh, and is there no Relief,
No Remedy, he cry'd, no Succour left?
Are we, alas! of ev'ry Hope bereft?

No, by no Means, quoth this designing Clerk,
Be of good Heart, and by Instruction work:
For if by *Nicholas* you will be led,

And build no Castles in your own wild Head,
None so secure; for *Solomon* says true,
Work all by Counsel, and you cannot rue.

If you'll be govern'd, and be rul'd by me,
I'll undertake to save thy Wife and Thee;
By my own Art against the Flood prevail,
And make no Use of either Mast or Sail.

Have you not heard how, when the World was naught,
Noah by heavenly Inspiration taught —

Ay, ay, quoth *John*, I've in my *Bible* found,
That once upon a Time the World was drown'd.
Hast thou not heard how *Noah* was concern'd
For his dear Wife, and how his Bowels yearn'd,

Till

Till he had built and furnish'd out a Bark,
 And lodg'd her with her Children in the Ark?
 Now, Expedition is the Soul and Life
 Of Business; if you love your Self, or Wife,
 Run, fly——for in this Case it is a Crime
 To loiter, or to lose an Inch of Time.
 For *Alison*, your self, and me, provide
 Three Kneading-Troughs, to sail upon the Tide:
 But take most special Care that they be large,
 In which a Man may swim as in a Barge.
 Let them be victuall'd well, and see you lay
 Sufficient Stores against a rainy Day;
 Enough to serve you twenty Hours and more,
 For then the Flood will 'swage, and not before.
 But one Thing let me whisper in your Ear,
 Let not thy sturdy Servant, *Robin*, hear,
 Nor bonny *Gillian* know what I relate;
 I must not utter the Decrees of Fate.
 Ask me not Reasons why I cannot save
 Your trusty serving Maid, and honest Knave:
 Suffice it thee, unless thy Wits be mad,
 To have as great a Grace as *Noah* had.
 Do you make haste, and mind the grand Affair;
 To save your Wife shall be my proper Care.
 But when these Kneading-Tubs are ready made,
 Which may secure us when the Floods invade;
 See that you hang them in the Roof full high,
 That none our providential Plot descry;
 And when thou hast convey'd sufficient Store
 Of Meat and Drink, as I have said before,
 And put a sharpen'd Ax in ev'ry Boat,
 To cut the Cord, and set us all afloat:
 Then thro' the Gable of the House, which lies
 Above the Stable, and the Garden spies,
 Break out a Hole, so very large and wide,
 Thro' which our Tubs may sail upon the Tide.
 Then wilt thou so much Mirth and Pleasure take
 In swimming, as the white Duck and the Drake,
 Then will I cry, Ho! *Alison* and *John*,
 Be merry, for the Flood will pass anon!

Then

Then wilt thou answer, Master *Nicholay*,
 Good-morrow, for I see it is broad Day.
 Then shall we reign as Emperors for Life,
 O'er all the World, like *Noah* and his Wife.
 But one Thing I almost forget to tell,
 Which now comes in my Head, (and mark me well)
 That on that very Night we go aboard,
 All must be hush'd, and whisper not a Word;
 But all the Time employ our holy Mind
 In earnest Pray'rs, for thus has Heav'n enjoyn'd.

You and your Wife must take a sep'rate Place,
 Nor is there any Sin in such a Case.
 To-morrow Night, when Men are fast asleep,
 We to our Kneading-Tubs will slyly creep;
 There will we sit each in his Ship apart,
 And wait the Deluge with a patient Heart.
 Go now; I have no longer Time to spare
 In sermoning, use expeditious Care.
 Your Apprehension needs no more Advice;
One single Word's sufficient for the Wise:
 And none, dear Landlord, can your Wit inform:
 Go, save our Lives from this impending Storm.
 Away hies *John*, with melancholly Look,
 And sigh'd and groan'd at ev'ry Step he took:
 To *Alison* he does his Fate deplore,
 And tells a Secret which she knew before:
 But yet she trembled like an *Aspen* Leaf,
 And seem'd to perish with dissembled Grief;
 Crying, Alas! what shall I do? — Be gone —
 Help us t'escape, or we are all undone:
 I am thy true and very wedded Wife,
 Go, dear, dear Spouse, and help to save my Life.

What strong Impressions does Affection give!
By Fancy Men have often ceas'd to live.
Howe'er absurd Things in themselves appear,
Weak Minds are apt to credit what they fear.

This silly Carpenter is almost *Wood*,
 And thinks of nothing else but *Noah's Flood*;
 Believes he sees it, and begins to quake,
 And all for *Alison* his Honey's Sake.

He's

He's over-run with Sorrow, and with Fear,
 And sends forth many a Groan, and many a Tear,
 A Kneading-Trough, a Tub, and Kemeling,*
 He gets by Stealth, and sends 'em to his Inn.
 He makes three Ladders, whence he climbs aloof,
 And privately he hangs them in the Roof.
 But first he victuall'd them, both Trough and Tub,
 With Bread and Cheese, and Bottles full of mighty Bub;
 Enough o'Conscience to relieve their Fast,
 And be sufficient for a Day's Repast.

But e'er this Preparation had been made,
 He sent to *London* both his Man and Maid,
 On certain Matters which concern'd his Trade.

And now came on the fatal *Monday* Night,
 Barr'd are the Doors, out goes the Candle-light;
 And when all Things in Readiness were set,
 These Three their Ladders take, and up they get.
 Now *Pater-noster*, *clum*, † said *Alison*,
 And *clum*, quoth *Nicholas*, and *clum*, quoth *John*:
 This Carpenter his *Orisons* did say,
 For Men in Fear are very apt to pray.
 Silent he waited, when the Skies would pour
 This unaccountable and dismal Show'r.

And now at *Curfew* ‡ Time, dead Sleep began
 To fall upon this easy simple Man;
 Who, after so much Care and Business past,
 And spent with sad Concern, was quickly fast.
 Soft down the Ladder stole this lovely Pair,
 Good *Nicholas*, and *Alison* the Fair:

* *A Brewer's Vessel.*

† *A Note of Silence.*

‡ *Curfew*, WILLIAM the Conqueror, in the first
 Year of his Reign, commanded, that in every Town and
 Village, a Bell should be rung every Night at eight of the
 Clock; and that all People should then put out their Fire
 and Candle, and go to Bed. The ringing of this Bell was
 call'd *Curfew*, that is, Cover Fire.

Then

Then, without speaking, to the Bed they creep,
 Of *John*, poor Cuckold! who was fast asleep;
 There all the Night they revel, sport, and toy,
 And act the merry Scene of am'rous Joy;
 Till that the Bell of *Lauds* began to ring,
 And the fat Fryers in the Chancel sing.

The Parish-Clerk, this am'rous *Abfalon*,
 Who over Head and Ears in Love is gone,
 At *O/ney* happen'd, with a jovial Crew,
 To spend the *Monday* as they us'd to do;
 There pulls a certain Fryer by the Sleeve,
 With Pardon begg'd, and, Father, by your Leave,
 When saw you *John* the Carpenter, he cries.
 Last *Saturday*, the Cloisterer replies,
 Since when I have not seen him with these Eyes.
 Perhaps abroad he's playing fast and loose,
 Or fetching Timber for the Abbot's Use,
 And lodges at the *Graunge* a Day or two;
 Or else at Home — I know no more than you.

This made *Nab*'s boiling Blood with Pleasure start,
 The News rejoic'd the Cockles of his Heart.
 Now is my Time, thinks he, the Moon is bright,
 Nor care I, if I travel all the Night;
 For at his Door, since Day began to spring,
 I've seen, like him, no kind of Man or Thing.

It is resolv'd — to *Alison* I'll go
 When the first Morning Cock begins to crow;
 And to her Window privately repair,
 Then knock, and tell her my tormenting Care:
 I'll open all my Breast, and ease my Heart,
 For 'tis too much to bear Love's stinging Smart,
 Some little Comfort sure I shall not miss,
 At least she'll grant the Favour of a Kiss:
 My Mouth has itch'd all Day, from whence it seems
 That I shall kiss; besides my pleasant Dreams
 Of Feasts and Banquets, whence a Man may guess
 That I may haply meet with some Success:
 But for an Hour or two before I go,
 I'll first refresh me with a Nap or so.

Now the first Cock had wak'd from his Repose
 The jolly *Abfalon*, and up he rose.
 But first he dresses finical and gay,
 And looks like any Beau at Church or Play,
 And brisk as Bridegroom on a Wedding Day.
 Nicely he combs the Ringlets of his Hair,
 And, wash'd with Rose-water, looks fresh and fair:
 Then with his Finger he her Window twang'd,
 Whisper'd a gentle Tone, and thus harangu'd,

Sweet *Alison*, my *Honeycomb*, my *Dear*,
 My *Bird*, my *Cinamon*, your *Lover* hear:
 Awake, and speak one Word before I part;
 But one kind Word, the *Balsam* to my Heart.
 Little you think, alas! the mighty *Woe*,
 Which for the Love of thee I undergo:
 For thee I *swelter*, and for thee I *sweat*,
 And mourn as *Lambkins* for the *Mother's Teat*.
 Nor false my *Grief*, nor does the *Turtle Dove*
 Lament more truly, or more truly Love.
 I cannot eat nor drink, and all for thee——
 Get from my Window, you *Jack Fool*, said she;
 I love another of a diff'rent Hue
 From such a silly *Dunder-head* as you.
 If you stand talking at that foolish Rate,
 My *Chamber-pot* shall be about your Pate.
 Be gone, you empty *Sot*, and let me sleep.
 At this poor *Abfalon* began to weep,
 And his hard Fate with Sighs and Groans deplore,
 Was ever faithful Love thus serv'd before?
 Since, then, my Sweet, what I desire's in vain,
 Let me but one small Boon, a Kiss obtain.
 And will you then be gone, nor loiter here,
 Quoth *Alison*? Ay certainly, my *Dear*.
 Make ready then —— Now, *Nicholas*, ly'e still;
 'Tis such a Jest that you shall laugh your fill.

Ravish'd

Ravish'd with Joy, *Nab* fell upon his Knees,
 The happiest Man alive in all Degrees.
 In silent Raptures he began to cry,
No Lord in Europe is so blest as I.
I may expect more Favours; for a Kiss
Is an Assurance of a farther Bliss.

The Window now unclasp'd, with slender Voice
 Cries *Alison*, be quick, and make no Noise;
 I would not for the World our Neighbours hear,
 For they're made up of Jealousy and Fear.

Then silken Handkerchief from Pocket came,
 To wipe his Mouth full clean to kiss the Dame.
 Dark was the Night, as any Coal or Pitch,
 When at the Window she clapp'd out her Breech.
 The Parish-Clerk ne'er doubted what to do,
 But ask'd no Questions, and in haste fell to:
 On her blind Side full favour'ly he prest
 A loving Kiss e'er he smelt out the Jest.

Aback he starts, for he knew well enough
 That Women's Lips are smooth, but these were rough:
What have I done? quoth he, and rav'd and star'd,
Ah me! I've kiss'd a Woman with a Beard.

He curs'd the Hour, and rail'd against the Stars,
 That he was born to kiss my Lady's Arse.

*Tehea** she cry'd, and clapp'd the Window close,
 While *Abfalon* with Grief and Anger goes
 To meditate Revenge; and to requite
 The foul Affront, he would not sleep that Night.
 And now with Dust, with Sand, with Straw, with Chips
 He scrubs and rubs the Kisses from his Lips.

Oft would he say, *Alas? O basest Evil!*
Than meet with this Disgrace so damn'd uncivil,
I rather had went headlong to the Devil.
To kiss a Woman's Breech! Oh, it can't be born!
But by my Soul I'll be reveng'd by Morn.

* *A Note of Laughter.*

Hot Love, the Proverb says, grows quickly cool,
 And *Absalon*'s no more an am'rous Fool,
 For, since his Purpose was so fondly crost,
 He gains his Quiet, tho' his Love is lost :
 And, cur'd of his Distemper, can defy
 All whining Coxcombs with a scornful Eye :
 But for meer Anger, as he pass'd the Street,
 He wept, as does a School-boy when he's beat .
 In a soft doleful Pace, at last he came
 To an old *Vulcan*, *Jarvis* was his Name,
 Who late and early at the Forge turmoil'd,
 In hammering Iron Bars and Plough-shares toil'd.
 Hither repair'd, by one or two a-Clock
 Poor *Absalon*, and gave an easy Knock.
Who's there, that knocks so late, Sir Jarvis cries?
 'Tis I, the pensive *Absalon* replies,
 Open the Door, *What*, *Absalon*, (quoth he)
The Parish-Clerk! Ah! Benedicite.
Where hast thou been? Some pretty Girl I wot
Has led you out so late upon the Trot.
Some merry Meeting on the wenching Score.
You know my Meaning — but I'll say no more.

This *Absalon* another Distaff drew,
 And had more Tow to spin than *Jarvis* knew :
 He minded not a Bean of all he said,
 For other Things employ'd his careful Head.
 At last he Silence breaks, dear Friend, he cries,
 Lend's that hot Pur, which in the Chimney lies :
 I have Occasion for't, no Questions ask,
 To bring it back again shall be my Task.

With all my Heart, quoth *Jarvis*, were it Gold,
 Or splendid Nobles in a Purse untold :
 With all my Heart, as I'm an honest Smith,
 I'll lend it thee; but what wilt do therewith ?
 For that, quoth *Absalon*, nor Care, nor Sorrow,
 I'll give a good Account of it To-morrow.

Then

Then up the Cutler in his Hand he caught,
 Tripp'd out with silent Pace and wicked Thought.
 Red-hot it was, as any burning Coal,
 With which to *John* the Carpenter's he stole.
 There first he cough'd, and as his usual Wont,
 Up to the Window came, and tapp'd upon't.
 Who's there, quoth *Alison*? Some Midnight Rook,
 Some Thief, I warrant, with a hanging Look.
 Ah! God forbid, quoth this dissembling Elf,
 'Tis *Abfalon*, my Life, my better Self!
 A rich Gold Ring I've to my Darling brought,
 By a known Graver exquisitely wrought:
 Beside a Posie, most divinely writ
 By a fam'd Poet and notorious Wit.
 My Mother gave it me, ('tis Wond'rous fine)
 She clapp'd it on my Finger, I on thine,
 If thou wilt deign the Favour of a Kiss —
 Now *Nicholas* by chance rose up to piss:
 Thinking to better and improve the Jest,
 He should salute his Breech before the rest.
 With eager Haste and secret Joy he went,
 And his Posteriors out at Window sent.
 Here *Abfalon* the Wag, with subtile Tone,
 Whispers, my Love! my Soul! my *Alison*!
 Speak, my sweet Bird, I know not where thou art—
 At this the Scholar let a rouzing Fart;
 So loud the Noise, as frightful was the Stroke
 As Thunder, when it splits the sturdy Oak.
 The Clerk was ready, and with hearty Gust,
 The red-hot Iron in his Buttocks thrust.
 Strait off the Skin, like shrivel'd Parchment flew,
 His Breech as raw as Saint *Bartholomew*:
 The Cutler had so sing'd his Hinder-part,
 He thought he should have dy'd for very Smart.
 In a mad Fit about the Room he ran,
Help, Water, Water, for a dying Man.

The

The Carpenter, as one beside his Wits,
Starts at the dreadful Sound, and up he gets :
The Name of Water rouz'd him from his Sleep ;
He rubb'd his Eye-lids, and began to peep.
Alas ! thought he, now comes the fatal Hour,
And from the Clouds does *Noah's* Deluge pour.
Up then he sits, and without more ado,
He takes his Ax, and smites the Cord in two.
Down goes the Bread, and Ale, and Cheese, and all,
And *John* himself had a confounded Fall :
Dropt from the Roof upon the Floor astound,
He lies as dead, and swims upon the Ground.

Then *Nicholas*, to play the Counterfeit,
With *Alison*, cries Murder in the Street.

In came the Neighbours pouring like the Tide,
To know the Reason why was Murder cry'd.
There they beheld poor *John*, a gasping Man ;
Shut were his Eyes, his Face was pale and wan :
Batter'd his Sides, and broken was his Arm ;
But stand it out he must, to his own Harm :
For when he aim'd to speak in his Defence,
They bore him down, and baffled all his Sense.
They told the People that the Man was Wood,
And dream'd of nothing else but *Noah's* Flood.
His heated Fancy of this Deluge rung,
That to the Roof three Kneading-Troughs he hung,
With which in Danger he design'd to swim,
And we, forsooth, must carry on the Whim ;
He begg'd and pray'd, and so we humour'd him.

At hearing this, the sneering Neighbours gave,
An universal Shout and hideous Laugh.
Now on the Roof, and now on *John* they gape,
And all his Earnest turn'd into a Jape.
He swore against the Scholar and his Wife,
And never look'd so foolish in his Life.
Whate'er he speaks the People never mind ;
His Oaths are nothing, and his Words are Wind,
Thus all consent to scoff each serious Word,
And *John* remain'd a Cuckold on Record.

Thus

Thus Doors of Brasse, and Bars of Steel, are vain,
 And watchful Jealousy, and carking Pain,
 Is fruitless all, when a good-natur'd Spouse
 Designs Preferment for her Husband's Brows.
 Thus *Alison* her Cuckold does defy,
 And *Abfalon* has kiss'd her nether Eye,
 While *Nicholas* is scalded in the Breech.
 My Tale is done : God save us all, and each.

F I N I S.



Thus Doors of Brass, and Bars of Steel, are vain,
 And watchful Jealousy, and curling Train,
 As trillies ill, when a good-manner'd Spout
 Designs Perfection for her Husband's Brow.
 Thus Alas! her Cuckold does defy,
 And Alas! her kind's her better Eye.
 While Michael is landed in the Broom,
 My Tale is done: God save us all, and each!

FINIS



A
H
D
T
A
H
M